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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the ongoing development of an inservice teacher education program for teachers in Albania following the downfall in the early 1990s of a repressive totalitarian regime. The Kualida project's name is an acronym based on the Albanian words for training, distance, and teachers and is very close in sound to the Albanian expression for quality. The project was one of the first initiatives to address the challenge of restructuring teacher education in that part of the world, and it remains unique in the southern Balkans in the way it utilizes open learning methodologies for inservice training. The first section of the paper examines research currently occurring regarding the history of teacher education in Albania and outlines the historical context in which the program is being developed. The second section presents the fieldwork and findings of the program evaluation, identifying three distinct but interwoven phases in the program: the context of criticism, the context of discovery, and the context of classroom practice. The paper concludes by formulating some key issues for those involved in the professional development of teachers through open learning. (Contains 32 references.) (SM)

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Teacher Education in Adversity: Albania's Kualida Project, 1994–1998

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Introduction

Teacher education is concerned with change. Change of individuals' personal goals and aspirations and change of institutional pedagogy and practice. The fundamental purposes of professional development are on the one hand to question, challenge and develop individual teachers and on the other to advance the quality of teaching and learning for young people in schools. Professional development programmes and teacher educators bear a major responsibility for formulating frameworks which will encourage not only the evaluation of existing practice but also innovatory practice. These are shared concerns, whether arising from the Pacific Rim, the countries of the Mediterranean basin, North America and northern Europe or southern Africa (Smith and Macindoe, 1991; Sultana, 1996; Breger, 1995; Glennie, 1996).

This paper focuses the ongoing development of an in-service teacher education programme for school teachers in Albania following the downfall, in the early 90's, of one of the most repressive totalitarian regimes in eastern Europe. 'Kualida' is an acronym based on the Albanian words for Training (Kualifikimi), Distance (i Distance) and Teachers (Arsimtevere), and very close in sound to the Albanian expression for quality. It was one of the first initiatives to address the challenge of restructuring teacher education (Leach and Lita, 1996) in that part of the world and remains unique in the southern Balkans in the way it is utilising open learning methodologies for in- service training .

Our opening section draws on original research currently being carried out by one of the authors into the history of teacher education in Albania and outlines the context in which the programme is being developed. The second section presents the field work and findings of the evaluation, identifying three distinct but interwoven phases in the programme:

the *context of criticism;*
the *context of discovery;*
and the *context of practice.*

We conclude by formulating some key issues for those involved in the professional development of teachers through open learning.

Albania - the context

The English historian Edward Gibbon, sailing off the coast of Albania in the 1790's, wrote of 'a country within the sight of Italy which is less known than the interior of America.' Two hundred years on Gibbon's observation still holds, despite the events of the last eighteen months having propelled Albania unwillingly into the world's media spotlight. Albania, is a country of dramatic natural beauty lying along the Adriatic Sea in the southern Balkans, bordering Montenegro to the north and the Grammos and Buret mountains of Greece to the south (Appendix A). A small country, it has a population of 3.4 million and an area of 28,750 sq km. Its GNP per capita is US$560. The primary phase of education (6-10 years) is compulsory. There are currently 37,181 teachers in Albania, 30,893 in elementary schools and 6,288 in secondary. The transformation of education is high on the political agenda and teacher education is a major focus .

The almost fifty year rule of dictator Enver Hoxha and his successor (1944-1991) was to eclipse the history of Albanian education and development prior to 1945, wiping from memory not only major educational innovations but also the work of Albania's leading educationists such as Komenski, Pestaloc, Herbart, Frebel and Jean Baptist Girard. Only recently have educational commentators[1] begun to painstakingly piece together their heritage

[1] e.g. members of the Faculty of History and Philology, University Tirana.

and rediscover the enlightened work of Albanian educators and their influence on pedagogical thinking in the country.

1900-1944

New directions in educational thought began to flourish in Albania as early as the turn of this century, linked in part to an ongoing struggle to establish a national education system against the constant threat of foreign invasions and occupation. This movement was symbolised by the unification of the Albanian alphabet, the widespread use of the Albanian language in teaching and textbooks, as well as the opening of tens of new schools between 1906 and 1912. The turn of the century also saw the opening of Albania's first pedagogical school (Shkolla Normale) designed to train junior elementary school teachers who would teach in the villages of Albania (including Kosova). A new vision for the future of Albanian education and in particular the role and work of its teachers was highlighted in the opening address of the director of the Shkolla Normale, Luigj Gurakuqui (1879–1925) from 1909 to 1911. Gurakuqui functioned as such for only a year. Later he was nominated as the Minister of Education of Albania:

> *iNe kete shkolle te madhe per msonjes, qe eshte deshiri i shpresa e te parevet tane prej vjetesh e vjetesh, fillesen e se ciles ne jemi mbledhun sot te kremtojme bashkarisht, kombi shqiptar po mbiell faren e ditunise, po hedh themelin e mesimit, pse nga kjo shkolle do te dalin ato apostuj te nxehte e te vullnetshme, qe do te perhapin driten nder ato ma tierrtat vise; do te dalin ato burra njeridashes, te cilet si Orfeu e si Anfioni, me urtesine e me ambelsine e fjalevet e te keshillavet te veta, do te zbutin egersinat, do te tundin currat e shkambijt, do te qytetrojne e tiafrojne njerezit e tii bajne qe te duen e te ndihmohen si vllau me vllame*[2].
>
> *In this great school for teachers, which has been the desire and hope of our ancestors for years on end, the beginning of which we are together to celebrate, the Albanian nation is sowing the seed of knowledge and laying the foundations of education. Outstanding apostles will graduate from this school, who will then enlighten the most remote regions of the country; tender hearted men will graduate from this school who, like Orpheus and Anphion who with their wisdom and sweet words, will tame the wild beasts, will shake rocks, will civilize and bring people together and will make them love each other like brothers.*
>
> (Vepra te zgjedhuna, T 1961, page 358)

Along with the management of the Shkolla Normale, Luigj Gurakuqi taught psychology, logic, pedagogy and Albanian language: grammar, syntax, literature and caligraphy. In the training of young teachers, he paid special attention to language related issues such as the use of a national Albanian language, based on the Elbasani dialect, so that the northerners and southerners could understand each other with ease. In addition to content related issues Gurakuqi sought to place an emphasis on teaching and educational (edukative) methods:

> *Le ta dijne mire te gjithe mesonjesit, si te vegjel si te medhenj qe te jene, do tii bajne ma te madhin sherbim atdheut e Kombit tiene, se nuk ka mjeshteri ma e ndershme e ma e dobishme se ajo e mesimiti -*
>
> *Let all teachers, both young and old, know that they will make the biggest contribution to the Nation, because there is no other skill that is more useful and honourable than teaching*
>
> (Gazeta Rilindja e Shqipnise, nr 8, date 8-9 1913)

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[2] Tanslation from the Albanian throughout this paper by Zana Lita

By 1920 the philosophy of the Shkolla Normale was beginning to reflect new pedagogical thinking and development ('new school' pedagogy and 'active pedagogy') that was sweeping Europe. This was a fertile period in relation to ideas about learning, a period in which educators from many countries were travelling, studying and exchanging ideas, not unlike the communities of travelling scholars of the Middle Ages. In this decade for example, John Dewey was developing his influential vision of democratic schooling in America, proposing an education of power and consequence for all students. He stressed the need for a 'new pedagogy' which would integrate the content of schooling with the activities of daily life. Whilst his ideas were influential in Europe as well as America, he in turn was influenced by European thought and practice. Following a visit to Russia in 1927 he wrote

> *" Russian school children are much more democratically organised than are our own..they are receiving through the system of school administration a training that fits them...for later active participation in the self direction of both local communities and industries"*
>
> (Dewey quoted in Shatsky, 1981).

It was at this time too that Vygotsky (1962) was beginning his major work 'Thought and Language' and carrying out seminal research with colleagues Luria, Leotiev and Sakharov, research which was to have a profound influence on educational thinking world wide and on which we will draw later in this paper.

During this period too, Albanian educators were encouraged to travel abroad, studying in countries such as Italy, France, Austria, and Germany and bringing back new ideas. Sotir Paparisto, for example, who had studied in Geneva, introduced handwriting in pen, opened a new pedagogic library, organized teacher training and experimented with 'the Global Method' of reading and writing. The teachers of the Shkolla Normale were particularly influential in introducing contemporary theory and practice into Albania whilst giving them an "Albanian coat". Aleksander Xhuvani, director of the Shkolla Normale between 1911 and 1934 published *Didaktikaî the research on Pestaloc* which enriched pedagogic thinking of the time. He wrote:

> *Gjithe ketyne te perpjekunave e drejtimeve te reja pedagogjike duhet tíiu biem mbrapa, qe te mund te riformohet edhe nder ne arsimi filluer, qe te kthehet edhe shkolla e jone tradicionale ne nje shkolle te re; shkolle e re do te thote gjallni, jete, do te thote me dite me ruejte personalitetin e femise dhe liriní e tij. Po per nje veper te tille te kaperthyeme e te rande duhet nje bashkepunim i gjithe fuqive arsimore, nji pune sistematike e pareshtun dhe mjete financiare.*
>
> *In order to train children better for life and to make them valuable members of society I would like to say that during recent times new trends and theories have developed in Pedagogy: there is a common understanding that the traditional school, whose work can be summarized in three points: reading, writing and numeracy should also allow room for the active school which means that: the psychology of the child, his needs and interests, his right to live free and happy should be taken into account; that all his physical and spiritual energies need to be taken into account and employed in order to enable the child to become useful for himself and society.*

The Albanian education journal, Normalisti, established between 1929-1937 kept teachers informed of new didactic developments, using teachers diaries as models, class observations done by student teachers and describing new didactic systems.

1944-1991

> *"The system in Albania has been totalitarian. Everything was axiomatic.There was no debate. Teachers' opinions were controlled. "*
>
> (Geography teacher, Gjirokastra)
>
> *"The system was designed to make the student fear the teacher, the teacher fear the school director, the director fear the school inspector, and the inspector fear the ministry."*

The rule of Enver Hoxha, probably the most obsessive and brutal of the Eastern European dictators, was to dominate the post war period, radically changing the direction of education in Albania from 1944 onwards. He ensured the country's isolation from the rest of Europe, retaining absolute control until the collapse of regimes in neighbouring regions. His repressive rule deeply impoverished the intellectual life of the country for a generation or more. Albania's leading literary figure, Ismail Kadare (1993), captures the intensity of his control vividly in his novel *The Palace of Dreams*. Exiled in Paris, Kadare wrote of the apparatchiks who decreed that even the dreams of the people had to be reported to a central Ministry.

Education was no exception in what was to become a heavily regulated, closed environment. A single, transmissional teaching methodology was the norm in schools, in which rote learning served to maintain the status quo. By 1963, twenty years on from the onset of Hoxha's rule, schooling was so deeply politicized that its single expressed purpose had become the communist education of the younger generation. The 'red thread' of the curriculum was evident in the so-called revolutionary triangle of teaching - physical labour, physical education and military training- outlined in the 1969 Constitution. *"Education in the PSRA*[3] *"it stated" is organized by the state, is free and open to all, and built on Marxist - Leninist principles.* State controlled education dominated the years that followed the implementation of this Constitution

1990- present

> *"Under the old system, students came into class, sat down and stayed still. The teacher took attendance, checked homework, and recited or read the day's lesson. No questions. No independent thinking".*

Albania was the last of Europe's Stalinist regimes to collapse in 1991. This dramatic political change propelled Albania once again into contact with the rest of Europe and the international community, after years of political, economic and cultural isolation. It was by now Europe's poorest country and by 1992 had become critically dependent on foreign aid and private remittances from abroad (Bassler 1995). Yet although European investment since then has totalled £365 million, the most aid per capita given to any country, less than a third has gone towards promoting civic institutions (Troiano, 1997). Albania's grave economic situation has impeded desperately needed political, civil and educational reform. Priorities have been difficult to establish in educational terms when the needs are so varied and pressing, the problems so wide ranging.

The impact of this period of intense political change coupled with the bleak economic context has been particularly devastating for education in Albania. Albania has some of the worst teaching conditions in Europe. As the regime crumbled in the student led revolution of 1991-2 schools were targeted as symbols of the Hoxha era, the World Bank estimates that at this time over 60% of schools were seriously vandalised or raised to the ground. There is a severe shortage of basic textbooks and paper. There is no educational technology. Vital

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[3] The People's Socialist Republic of Albania

infrastructures such as roads and telecommunications remain fragile and unreliable. US$9 million was borrowed from overseas donors in 1994 just for school rehabilitation projects - attending to broken or missing windows and furniture, collapsing roofs and walls, non-functioning or non-existent sanitation facilities, and missing or broken heating equipment (Berryman 1994; Vachon 1996). Nevertheless almost 80% of Albania's population is literate, having completed at least four years of schooling, an educational achievement remarkable for a country of its income level. (Vachon, 1996)

In teacher education, training requirements are low by European standards. Half of all primary teachers have only a secondary education qualification. At the pre-schools level only 6% of teachers have a qualification higher than that of secondary level. At the secondary level the situation improves with 94% holding a degree although few teachers have a full degree relevant to the subject within which they are teaching (Berryman 1994). Albania's political and geographical isolation has also meant that educationalists have been unable to keep abreast of modern developments in curriculum and pedagogy. Teacher educators face a long term need to create curricular frameworks that reflect current subject knowledge and the best pedagogical practice within the Albanian context. Such areas are the focus of intense political and educational dialogue, fundamental curriculum change is a fiercely contested area.

A cascade system of teacher training is in place which takes care of the training of teachers countrywide. It involves 1,000 formateurs (advisory teachers), from the 37 districts of Albania, covering all subject areas and teaching part-time in schools . In many instances however this system creates more problems than solutions. Information is distorted because of the varied quality of formateurs. Selection criteria have not always been strictly applied and in some areas the country's limited financial resources fail to keep the system going. In addition the mountainous terrain of almost two thirds of the country's landmass makes it difficult for teachers, particularly those from remote rural areas, to travel to the training centres and attend the local seminars. For these reason the training has often done more harm than good. A World Bank strategy report on educational development in Albania summarised the "retraining challenge" facing the country thus:

> *"cascade training can behave like gossip, the message becoming increasingly distorted as it travels from person to person. More fundamentally, unless training combines new knowledge with its guided and corrected application (for, example in simulated classrooms), it will change teachers' verbal repertoire but not their practice. Thus the retraining challenge will be to design curricula that help trainees transfer what they know into what they do and to design school or district-level mechanisms that reinforce the new learning."*
>
> (Berryman 1994 p. 64).

Albania is charged for change as the context outlined above vividly portrays. Contexts are sometimes conceived of as containers of behaviour, untouched in themselves by human action. Alternatively they are viewed as fields of discourse, social situations created at will by two or more people interacting independently of the deep seated practices and socioeconomic structures of the surrounding culture. Our sketchy overview of Albanian's education history since the turn of the century reveals the inadequacy of both views of context. Albania's recent history starkly demonstrates the usually indirect, hidden influence of human activity in the creation and reproduction of institutional systems, providing a singular transparency on the meaning of context. Lefebvre (1991) has argued "(Social) space is a (social) product .....Space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and action...in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power; yet....as such, it escapes in part from those who would make use of it". Thus he argues, settings and boundaries are products and objects of social struggle in profound and far reaching ways. Hoxha's government banned books and newspapers and jammed foreign broadcasts on radio and TV in order to control knowledge and thought as well as political power. The intellectual struggle that Lefebvre describes is exemplified in accounts of visitors to Hoxha's Albania who left Western magazines and newspapers on park benches; or in the hundreds of Albanians listening in secret to the banned BBC World Service.

Such anecdotes stand in bleak contrast to the open borders of the 1920's or the dialogue we have outlined between Albanian educators and other European thinkers . Drawing on Lefebvre's work Nespor (1994) has argued that educators need to recognise the way in which "education is accomplished as a space-time process".

From such a perspective the methodology of open and distance learning takes on a new significance in modern Albania The creation of the Kualida open learning programme we will argue, has the potential to unlock control of space and time, creating opportunity for new dialogue amongst Albanian teachers and educators. These are ideas to which we will return.

Innovation and change through professional development- a case study

The Albanian Education Development Project 's (A.E.D.P.) decision to develop an in service programme for Albanian teachers emerged out of the context we have described. Two main purposes needed to be addressed by any project, namely:

- the low level of qualification of many teachers and
- their limited pedagogical knowledge within the tradition of a static, class centred instructional methodology.

Despite the urgent and felt need for such training there was also widespread scepticism and a feeling of threat on the part both of individuals and institutions from the outset of the programme.

In creating Kualida, the Albanian Education Development Project (A.E.D.P.) adapted an open and distance teaching strategy using expertise and experience from the Open University in Britain (Moon, 1998; Burgess and Bourdillon, 1998), but basing the programme development wholly within Albania. A.E.D.P. works independently of, but in consultation with the Albanian Ministry of Education, its work reflects the government's overall educational strategy whilst maintaining a degree of autonomy for participants. Three key premises were fundamental in the establishment of this in service programme:

- the programme should be teacher and school centred and the involvement of people with direct school experience in the design and development of the course was essential;
- local support structures should be put in place with training for teachers playing leadership roles;
- school based activities should be fully integrated into the framework of the programme.

(Leach and Lita, 1996)

In 1995 four development teams were established to develop the short in-service programme for teachers of English, French, Geography and History working in the elementary stage 5-8. The main focus was methodological issues. The initial study into the feasibility of using open learning in Albania (Moon and Leach, 1995) recommended that a project be piloted with teachers in four districts of Albania. These districts were Shkodra, Elbasan, Tepelena and Gjirokastra. Two of these are rural communities where there is also a university. A.E.D.P. closely followed the feasibility study's recommendations and the resulting programme, involving an open learning study guide, school based activities, three accompanying television programmes, and tutorial support was trialled with over 800 teachers in the period 1995/6. An intensive external evaluation of the project was carried out encompassing all the pilot districts. The data drawn on in this paper included: an anonymous questionnaire to the eight hundred teachers in the project (96% return); semi structured interviews with the director of education, formators and inspectors in the four pilot districts; open meetings with teachers in three out of four of the pilot districts; observation of lessons taught by project

members in each district; teacher notebooks; tutor planning documents. Interviews and meetings were conducted in a mixture of English, French and Albanian with an Albanian interpreter available for the external evaluators throughout.

We use three distinct but interwoven phases to analyse the programme in this paper (Engestrom, 1996). The first phase, the *context of criticism* involves breaking the encapsulation of traditional practice. It demands that practitioners be involved in a critical examination of everyday, familiar ways of working. In this phase tacit practices - the hidden curriculum - are analysed and made explicit and the key processes of resisting, questioning, contradicting and debating must be engaged. The second phase, we have identified as the *context of discovery*, learners need an opportunity to design a way out of the practice under criticism, find a new model for their activity. In other words they must learn something that is not yet there; they "acquire their future activity while creating it". (Engestrom, 1996). Here the processes of experimenting, modelling, symbolising and generalising are demanded. The final phase is the *context of practical social application*, when the new, expanded object of learning is implemented. Here the process of guided experience within communities of practice takes centre stage. Such expansion of learning into new and challenging areas demands a formation of networks that transcend institutional boundaries (Miettinan, 1990).

In using these ideas as a frame for the field work that is outlined below our focus is *joint practice*: the joint activity of the course development team; the dialogue created between teacher and study guide; the activity of classroom practice; the 'forums for enquiry ' (Leach 1996) both planned and unplanned. Most frameworks for teacher development focus primarily on individuals, be they theories about reflective practice, the transition from novice to expert or competence models of development. Our overall analysis will be based on the premise that the process of teacher development is a social practice. The quality of joint practice is not an optional extra or bolt-on in teacher education; it is the essence of change.

Joint practice: criticism - discovery - classroom practice

> *Knowledge is always situated..it reflects a micro-culture of praxis: the reference books one uses, the notes one habitually takes, the computer programs and data bases one relies on, and perhaps most important of all, the network of friends, colleagues, or mentors onwhom one leans for feedback, help, advice or even just for company." (Bruner, 1996)*

Course development

A course development team, consisting of Albanian teachers, University lecturers, advisory teachers (formators) and members of the country's Pedagogic Institute was appointed to construct the three month pilot in-service teacher education programme. The diverse experiences and expertise of this national team were to prove critical in the success of the programme - classroom practitioners needed to work closely alongside university academics if the in service materials were to be authentic, engaging with and taking account of day to day classroom practice.

An intensive week long seminar with experienced teacher educators from the Open University (UK) was provided at the outset for the development team, which encouraged discussion of classroom methodologies and existing open learning models written for a British teaching context. During this time the Albanian team jointly designed a common but powerful framework to embrace the four subjects areas; four A4 course manuals were planned and three 45 minute television programmes. A.E.D.P. simultaneously planned a programme of tutor training and support.

The Albanian team met each month to exchange ideas and drafts and to discuss the choice of classrooms for the filming of new practice. The appointment of a critical reader from the national Pedagogic Institute was an important strategy at this stage in maintaining official Ministry endorsement for the programme. Members continued working full time in other

posts in schools or universities throughout the writing period: debates about content were heated, sometimes acrimonius, nevertheless sixteen of the original twenty team members saw the project through to completion.

Resources and support structures during production were minimal - in addition to the course writers, the team included only one experienced cameraman from the national television department and one secretary. As the materials were written they were keyed into a basic PC computer using a desk top publishing programme. Frequent electricity cuts led to whole sections of work being lost and similarly to delays at the printing house. These sparse resources and fragile technological support were not apparent in the resulting manuals, packaged in substantial folders together with notebook and pen. The packs, distributed by lorry to each of the four districts, were of a far higher quality both in content and presentation than anything previously given to teachers. From feasibility study to completion a period of only nine months reflected the urgency and intense commitment of those involved.

The conceiving and writing of the programme in itself is illustrative of our frame, involving the interweaving phases of *criticism, discovery* and *practical application.* The notion of *joint practice* does not imply some idealised group working in harmonious collaboration. In any real life community of practice members will have different interests, make diverse contributions to activity, and hold varied viewpoints which involve conflict as well as resolution. Our use of the term joint practice however, does imply participation in an activity about which participants share a common purpose, and an understanding about what it means in their lives and for their communities. Such an interpretation takes as its starting point the fact that mental activity involves social co ordination; solving a problem, getting a job done are almost always done in conjunction with others. What makes an individual competent is not just what he or she knows but also how his or her knowledge fits in with that of others with whom the activity must be shared and co ordinated (Resnick,1994).

The programme

The twelve week course is based around four short study texts (Musai, 1995) one for each subject area; its opening section, common to all subjects, focuses on *Metodolgji* (methodologies). New strategies for teaching and learning such as problem solving, brainstorming, role play, group and pair work, the use of questioning and pupil assessment are gradually introduced. Throughout the first part of the course, teachers are invited to question, debate and problemmatise aspects of current practice and to engage deeply in a *context of criticism.* The second half of the course *Veprimtari* (Activities) provides teachers with exemplar material to be adapted and tried out in their own teaching contexts. The three television programmes, filmed in Albanian classrooms, complement these activities, illustrating different approaches to teaching and learning. Here the processes of experimenting, modelling and generalising takes central place in the programme. Teachers are invited to move into context *of discovery* both by the course materials and the accompanying tutorial programme.

Traditionally, for example, in the autumn term, a teacher of English would be required to read an Albanian folk tale with Class 6; pupils would be asked to copy out sentences from the national primer and complete written exercises. Acknowledging the reality of this classroom context, the course team discusses through the voice of the study guide, the way in which brainstorming techniques, dialogue and group work might be used to introduce this folk tale, developing pupils' oral skills as well as their understanding. An accompanying television sequences illustrates the approach and the manual asks teachers "Write another activity similar to this. The topic is free". In the evaluation 77% of the teachers rated the course materials very useful or quite useful. 60% said they had been very useful or quite useful in helping to improve classroom practice.

Written and television exemplars range from the simplest idea for paired dialogue in a French classroom and strategies for questioning and explaining in geography, to the introduction of an ambitious role play of a key historical event, filmed with pupils in

Gjirokastra's castle. It was the first time in the history of Albanian teacher education that role play had been used in the teaching and learning of history. Many teachers complained that such role play was feasible only for a certain local context (Gjirokastra) as the legend was typical for that city. As they studied and worked on school experience activities however they began to understand the way in which role play could be used in their local context.

The TV programme supporting the newly written civics programme includes a classroom court scene in which Albanian pupils present evidence and argue a point of view. Debate country wide has been provoked by such programmes which have been screened on mainstream television at peak viewing times. More than 80% of Albanian homes have television, for whilst the Hoxha regime jammed foreign broadcasts it recognised TV as the ideal way to get his image into every living room. Following the Kualida model, private television stations are beginning to develop local teacher training programmes, inviting Albanian teachers to share experiences in local settings in the context of the national programme.

Moving teachers from the process of discovery into the *context of practical* application presented the greatest challenge for the course developers. In the early stages of the programme there were significant numbers of teachers afraid to speak openly about new methodologies and as mentioned earlier, many others who resisted debate. From the second month of the course onwards time is allocated to classroom based activities alongside study time for text and tutorial study. Moving from the carefully designed activities within the course materials and exemplars of real classrooms on the television programmes, teachers are given models that enable a process of guided experience, providing teachers with confidence to try out these new approaches in their own classrooms. The importance of the iteration between 'theory' and 'practice' was a recurrent theme in the evaluation interviews:

> "....the methodology is useful but the practical element invaluable";
>
> "theoretically speaking the methods are contemporary & the teachers are keen, practically speaking the materials are helpful";
>
> "the combination of text & practical activities is very successful".
>
> "In tutorials there was a great need to discuss and debate different models."

The context of practical application had clearly had a major impact on the teachers in the project with 53% evaluating the Classroom Activities as 'very / quite useful', 38% as 'useful'. Over 60% responded that Kualida had been 'very useful' in helping to improve classroom practice

Each teacher is assigned to a subject tutor (formateur) who has also received training. In tutorials links are encouraged between the Activities and more theoretical aspects of the materials, a vital opportunity for discussing and analysing new practice away from the pressures of the classroom Three tutorials are provided - at the beginning, middle and towards the end of the programme and overall attendance at tutorials is high. *'The organisation of tutorials was good'* commented a French teacher; *'the organisation was important, they were not as authoritarian as before'*. One formateur noted *'we have also learned a lot from this project. Whatever happens in the future we have considered it useful for ourselves'*. There was clear evidence of vigorous debate about the new approaches to teaching and learning.

Overall the work of formateurs was rated more highly than any other aspect of the programme in the end of course evaluation, with 81% of teachers grading them as 'very useful/ quite useful', indicating the critical role of forums for joint debate and dialogue. Many formateurs have been active in visiting teachers in their schools, discussing and giving feedback on lessons. However, Kualida also explicitly urges teachers to build on traditional practice by meeting with colleagues from neighbouring schools and visiting each others' classrooms. The formateur is no longer seen as the only source of information but as a facilitator and supporter for teachers when trying out new methods. Additional forums of

school based support are in evidence. In many of the classrooms visited in the evaluation phases there were as many as twelve subject specialists from neighbouring schools observing and discussing lessons together in pairs or threes. This communal approach to analysing practice has embedded itself into the project and was frequently referred to in the evaluation process:

> *"There was great interest in the project for teachers in other subject areas. Colleagues asked us about the methodologies - so model lessons were given in school for groups of teachers to watch and discuss";*
>
> *"We have arranged open classes in both the elementary and secondary schools".*

Given the generic framework of the project, *Kualida* quickly went beyond the borders of the four curriculum areas. It began to be used by teachers of other subject areas, and teachers of lower levels (junior elementary) thus leading to a larger involvement of teachers. The universities also felt the need of using the Kualida materials: 'We badly need them. We have lagged behind' (*University teacher in the University of Shkodra*).

The three phases we have used to frame this process of transformation of practice are not successive in the self contained way described here. They necessarily interweave. They will also run in parallel, as different groups of teachers collaborate on different phases. This will be inevitable as new teachers embark on the programme[4] . This multiplicity of approach is not only consonant with the whole basis of open and flexible learning, it chimes with recent understandings about multiple ways of knowing (Gardner, 1993). Each of the three complementary modes of knowing and learning has distinctive strengths, which in turn provide models for teaching and learning in the classroom.

Joint practice

> *"We do not learn a way of life and ways of deploying mind unassisted, unscaffolded, naked before the world_the agentive mind.seeks out dialogue and discourse with other active minds."*
>
> (Bruner, 1996 p.93)

Most studies of teacher development rest on a view of cognition which locates the learning process largely in the head of the individual. Such analyses reinforce the view of the solitary practitioner behind the closed door of the classroom, affirms an individualistic, common sense 'sink or swim' approach to teacher development (Leach 1996 ii). Schon's (1987) concept of the individual "reflective practitioner" for example has been influential as a model that broadly encompasses not only the 'novice' engaged in pre-service education but also the experienced teacher involved in an ongoing process of professional development. Such theories of teacher development, resting as they do on the internalisation of knowledge, remain silent about the invention of new knowledge for practice. As such they are insufficient to account for the dynamic and innovative learning processes underpinning both personal and professional development involved in programmes such as Kualida The project led us to formulate the questions that have informed this paper:

> How does *new knowledge* in practice develop?
> What motivates innovation and change?
> How can such a process be conceptualised, analysed and evaluated?

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[4]The Kualida project has now moving into a national dissemination phase. New materials in other subject areas- Civics and the Albanian language are in preparation, as are other materials for the original four areas of study. A pre service open learning programme will be developed in 1998.

Learning within Kulaida was created and transformed at the intersection of dialogue between people and their collective knowledge and experience. The process of learning from this perspective has been powerfully described by Bruner (1986; 1996) as a forum or dialogue which includes but goes beyond reflection. This account of learning as a socio cultural process is largely informed by the work of Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1984) whose formulated the influential concept of the zone of proximal development, an interactive system

> *"within which people work on a problem which at least one of them could not, alone, work on effectively. Cognitive change takes place within this zone, where the zone is considered both in terms of an individuals developmental history and in terms of the support structure created by other people and cultural tools in the setting."*
>
> (Newman, Griffin & Cole, 1989, p.61)

The zone of proximal development is not an attribute of a person but the attribute of an event - a particular situated pedagogical relationship. The potential level of achievement is a measure of the strength of the cultural framework which supports that learning. (Mercer 1995)

Vygotsky's concept has ben primarily related to childhood learning, but contemporary writers working in this tradition have taken a broader perspective (Lave and Wenger 1991; Engestrom, 1996). Hedegaard (1996) for example proposes that the zone of proximal development can be defined as a tool for group instruction when a group functions actively as a whole through dialogue, group work and task solutions. Engestrom (1987) argues that where people learn to do things they have not done before, zones of proximal development are collective rather than individual phenomena and the new is a "collective invention in the face of felt dilemmas and contradictions that impede ongoing activity and impel movement and change" (Chaiklin and Lave 1993 p.13). The study of learning and development is thus extended beyond the context of pedagogical structuring and a small aura of socialness, to include the structure of the social world in the analysis.

The premise that zones of proximal development are collective rather than individual phenomena is clearly a challenging notion to grapple with. This paper has suggested that it is a notion that can fruitfully be used to analyse a societally significant practice such as professional learning if, as has been argued, such learning is centrally concerned with change and development. Embedded in the account of Kualida is the powerful metaphor of teachers moving within a collective zone, learning together to construct new knowledge for practice.

Conclusion

Kualida illustrate the thesis that new thinking is a "collective invention in the face of felt dilemmas and contradictions". The methodology of supported open learning not only enables a variety of forums for joint practice , it challenges the control of space and time which has for so long dominated Albania. The programme team combined ideas of Dewey and Vygotsky, both writing in the 1930's, with new Albanian ideas in the study guide. Traversing time and space these ideas create what Soja (1989) has called a 'socio-spatial dialectic' as they are read for the first time by teachers in outlying villages in Albania. And as these teachers take notes, work problems, analyse models they mobilise, move and combine representations of disparate times and spaces - an important step towards 'open' learning. Yet the programme we have described is still one of constraint as well as possibility. 'Distance education' has taken root in Albania, but whilst access to books and educational technology remain limited, 'open learning' cannot be fully realised. With inescapable irony 'open' and distance learning continues to be bounded and circumscribed at the closing of the twentieth century. The teachers in Bourdillon and Burgess' paper (1998) have instant and constant access to wide ranging knowledge and ideas through their electronic network alone. They can 'walk' into Harvard library or the British Museum and conference with other students as far distant as Australia by e-mail. Nespor's 'geographical' view of knowledge

and learning has illuminated the way in which learning is both 'distributed' and controlled, with shifting boundaries and composition that powerfully spread across space and time. It also leads inevitably to the conclusion that technological resource must be high on the agendas of governments and associated donor agencies if they are really concerned with educational access.

The notion of *joint practice* and the issues raised would seem pertinent for open learning programmes for teacher education in whatever context they are developed. Such analysis underlines that effective frameworks for practice such as mentoring, peer appraisal, joint observation and electronic conferencing are not add-ons for teacher development; they are the heart of the venture. Teacher education programmes should provide opportunities for:

> *a context of criticism*, highlighting understanding through resisting, questioning, debating. Structured forums for enquiry such as tutorials, peer mentoring and open classrooms must be built into any open learning programme for teacher education;
>
> *a context of discovery*, emphasising understanding, providing opportunities for experimenting, modelling, symbolising and generalising. Opportunities need to be given for teachers to engage in the guided application of new activities and experimentation as well as the discussion and evaluation of such practice;
>
> *a context of practical application*, which takes into account the situated nature of knowing. The school as a site for learning is of central concern;

In addition programmes should create:

> *model learning environments for joint practice*, teaching and learning should fully mirror that which is expected of the best practice in classroom contexts;
>
> *networks that transcend single institutional boundaries*, which have the potential to open up dialogue and debate that crosses national and cultural boundaries;
>
> *a climate of inquiry* – in which teachers see professional development as an ongoing search for the quality of teaching and learning for young people.

In the evaluation phase of the Kualida programme a Geography teacher noted

> *"Kualida has changed old concepts that were useless, it is the opening of a window that breaks the framework of the ex-regime. It is legitimatising a new system in a new educational setting - it is a programme for the future."*

By stating what belongs to the past, and of what the future might consist, by defining what comes before and what comes after, Albanians impose a new space and time. They are defining space and its organisation, values and standards that begin to create a new geography of learning.

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